



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 8, 2007

## FACT SHEET

FY08 Budget

**SANDERS ADDS \$5.32 MILLION TO  
FIRE-RESCUE DEPARTMENT BUDGET**  
*FY08 Budget Enhancements Will Help Address Facilities,  
Fleet and Equipment Needs*

**MAYOR URGES SAN DIEGANS TO BE VIGILANT IN CLEARING AWAY  
BRUSH FROM RESIDENCES AND BUSINESSES**  
*Driest Conditions in 90 Years Raise Concerns for Firefighters Statewide*

Mayor Jerry Sanders announced today that as part of the Fire-Rescue Department's proposed \$180 million FY08 budget, \$5.32 million represents enhancements to help address the City's ongoing fire, rescue and life-safety needs.

The Mayor also urged San Diegans to be ever vigilant in clearing brush away from residences and businesses. California is experiencing its driest conditions in 90 years, prompting concern from fire officials across the state about a potential increase in fire danger.

San Diego has already experienced six vegetation fires this year during cold and foggy conditions. As the City heads into warmer, dryer weather, the chance for canyon and wild fires increases. Property owners can help decrease the risk of fire by effectively clearing brush that exists within 100 feet of structures. A copy of the City's Brush Management Guide appears on pages 3-4 of this Fact Sheet.

The Mayor's budgetary enhancements underscore his commitment to keep public safety a top priority even during difficult financial times. Elements of the enhancements include:

- **Fleet replacement and additions for the Fire Rescue Department (\$1.96 million).** Long overdue, the Mayor is focusing attention on replacing outdated fire vehicles, including the replacement of two unreliable and substandard water tenders that are over 26 years old (\$500,000). Replacement will ensure an adequate and timely supply of water when hydrants

are not available. Also being replaced are: the department's only front-line emergency response foam apparatus (\$600,000), 15 emergency response-capable staff vehicles (\$491,000), five aged mid-size emergency response capable staff vehicles (\$74,650), two Battalion Chief vehicles (\$130,000), one aged and repair-prone callback response vehicle (\$40,000), three 2-wheel-drive support function pickup trucks (\$58,000); and the addition of five midsize sedans (\$65,190).

- **Fire Department Equipment Enhancements (\$1.07 million).** For years, the Fire Rescue Department has gone without critical equipment. While acknowledging that this will not address or solve all of the equipment needs, the Mayor believes that this is a step in the right direction. Chief among the enhancements are full funding for the helicopter/hoist lease-purchase payments (\$341,100), three compressed breathing air refill units to be installed in fire stations (\$169,682), 70 complete turnout sets (fire retardant coats and pants) (\$140,000), the replacement of outdated 800MHz mobile radios on all apparatus (\$83,262), and the repair and replacement of vehicular exhaust and extraction systems on vehicles as needed (\$75,000).
- **Partial-year staffing for the new, developer built Fire Station 47 in Pacific Highlands (\$1.17 million).** Set to open in late fall 2007, this fire station will service communities in the rapidly growing Carmel Valley area. It is anticipated that the addition of this station will dramatically reduce fire and life safety service response times in this region.

**SAN DIEGO FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT**

ITEM CATEGORY	BUDGET ENHANCEMENT AMOUNT
Partial Year Staffing for Newly Built Fire Station 47	\$1.170 million
Fleet replacement and additions	\$1.96 million
Equipment Enhancements	\$1.07 million
JPA HIRT Program	\$143,900
Fire Personnel Training	\$66,980
Information Technology Needs	\$35,500
Lifeguard Staffing	\$291,091
Lifeguard Training	\$587,000
<b>TOTAL ENHANCEMENTS</b>	<b>\$5.32 million</b>

# City of San Diego Brush Management Regulations

See also Bulletin #2:  
Use of Goats for  
Brush Management

## BULLETIN #1: BRUSH MANAGEMENT GUIDE For Private Property



February 2006

The City of San Diego has over 900 linear miles of urban wildland interface, where the back yards of homes meet the natural vegetation in canyons. Years of drought have increased the flammability of this vegetation. During certain times of the year, native vegetation can pose a wildfire risk and requires proper management to prevent future tragedies. This Bulletin describes actions you and your family should take to reduce your chances of being affected if a wildfire ever occurs near you.

### SAN DIEGO'S UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT

San Diego's semi-arid natural environment contains low-growing brush called *coastal sage scrub* or *chaparral*, which is home to many rare and endangered plants and animals. In fact, San Diego has more sensitive species than anywhere in the continental United States. Fire is an integral part of the ecology of this environment; the vegetation needs periodic burning to regenerate. *Fire becomes a potential problem where there are homes located next to the native vegetation.* But, you can create a *defensible space* around your home that can slow the fire down, giving firefighters crucial time and space to protect your home.

### CREATING "DEFENSIBLE SPACE"

*Defensible Space* is the landscape between your house and the potential fuel source (natural brush) that it is your responsibility as a homeowner to maintain to reduce fire risk. The City's Municipal Code\* regulates brush management and creates two *Brush Management Zones* with different requirements. The Code was amended in October 2005 to make these Zones total 100 feet of defensible space from the structure throughout the City. ***Although these amendments do not apply in the Coastal Overlay Zone until adopted by the Coastal Commission (Spring 2006), the Fire Chief recommends voluntary compliance.***

**Brush Management Zone 1 is typically 35 feet from the structure (25-35 feet in the Coastal Zone, until The Coastal Commission adopts changes), on the flatter part of the property next to your house.**

#### ZONE 1:

- ✓ Must be irrigated or watered regularly
- ✓ Must consist mostly of ornamental vegetation like lawns, low-growing shrubs, some trees, with not more than 10% native or naturalized vegetation.
- ✓ Trees and large shrubs must be pruned away from structures and roofs.
- ✓ Any wooden structures in Zones 1 and 2 ( such as decks, or fences ) not having a 1-hour fire resistance rating or built of combustible materials, must be removed.
- ✓ Irrigation from Zone 1 must not run onto Zone 2 (it encourages weed growth).

**Brush Management Zone 2 is the remaining 65 feet from your structure ( 20 - 50 feet in the Coastal Zone, until the Coastal Commission adopts changes ), and is usually comprised of natural vegetation.**

#### ZONE 2:

- ✓ Can have NO permanent irrigation.
- ✓ Must be *thinned and pruned* regularly to reduce vegetation by 50%, without harming native plants, soil or habitats, as described on the reverse side of this Bulletin.

*NOTE: Brush management is not allowed in coastal sage scrub during the California gnatcatcher nesting season, March 1 through August 15. This small bird only lives in coastal sage scrub and is listed as a threatened species by the federal government. Any harm to this bird could result in fines and penalties.*

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## HOW TO THIN AND PRUNE BRUSH IN ZONE 2

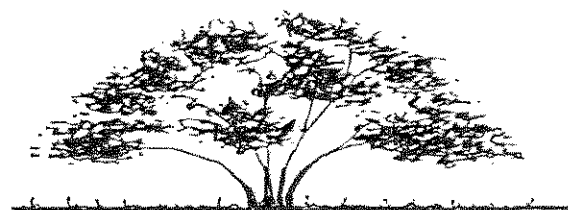
**Step 1: Remove** ....as much of the dead wood as you can.

**Step 2: Prune** .....tall vegetation like chaparral by cutting and shaping larger plants into “umbrellas.” This means pruning away the lower branches—about half--of plants over 2 feet high to create umbrella-shaped canopies. If you can, it’s a good idea to prune the lower branches of all the larger plants. This allows you to see and deal with what is growing underneath. Do not prune the tops of plants, just the lower branches. This keeps the plant healthy, and the shade from the plant canopy reduces weed and plant growth underneath. In vegetation that is less tall, like coastal sage scrub, you may not need to do Step 2.

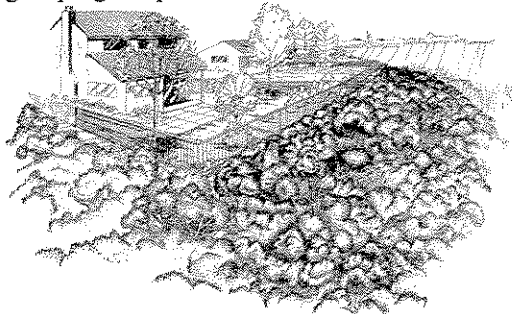
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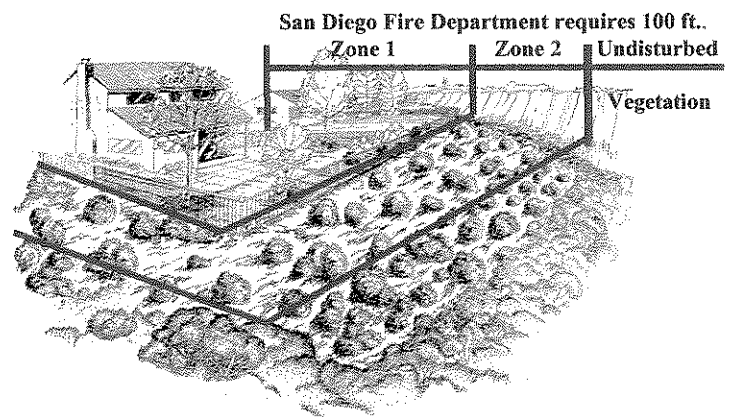
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**Step 3: Thin** ....the entire Zone 2 area. This means cutting down no more than 50% of the plants over 2 feet high to a height of 6 inches, and may include some of the plants you pruned in Step Two. Don’t go any lower than 6 inches so the roots remain to control soil erosion. The goal is to create a “mosaic” or more natural look, as shown below, so do your cutting in a “staggered” pattern. Leave uncut plant groupings of 400 square feet—that’s a 20 x 20-foot area, or an area that can be encircled by an 80-foot rope--separated by groupings of plants cut down to 6 inches.



**Before Brush Management**



**After Pruning and Thinning**

**Step 4: Dispose** ....of the cuttings and dead wood by either hauling it to a landfill; or, by chipping/mulching it on-site and spreading it out in the Zone 2 area to a depth of not more than 6 inches.

**Step 5: Prune annually** ....because plants will grow back. You can also “nip it in the bud” by rubbing out the buds on plants in the spring to keep from having to prune and thin as often.

Note: See *Bulletin #2: Use of Goats for Brush Management*, for an alternative way to thin brush.

### Additional Information

- Brush/Weed Abatement; use of goats: City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (619) 533-4444.
- Property restrictions (easements, permits, deed or title): County Recorder (619) 237-0502.
- Obtaining permits for brush management on private property with restrictions: City of San Diego Development Services Department (619) 446-5000.
- Brush Management on City-owned open space land: City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department, Brush Management Section (619) 525-8607.

\*Authority: *City of San Diego Municipal Code Chapter 14, Article 2, Division 4, Sections 142.0402, 142.04030, 142.0412.*

*Revised 02/10/06 (San Diego Fire-Rescue)*